

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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A Case of Botulism Found in Howard County

Columbia, MD – An illness called botulism has recently been identified in Howard County. Botulism is a serious illness caused by a toxin that attacks the body's nerves. Botulism can be caused by eating contaminated food or beverages. It is often associated with improperly home-canned, preserved or fermented foods. It is **not** contagious.

A Health Department preliminary investigation identified the possible source as an acupuncture and herbal practice in Ellicott City. If food, teas, or other products that can be put in/on the body were purchased, or otherwise received from this practice, located in the 3300 block of St. Johns Lane, it is strongly recommended to discard it immediately. It may be put in the trash, or if it is liquid, dumped down the sink.

Botulism occurs when a person eats or drinks something contaminated with this toxic bacterium. The first symptoms may include nausea and vomiting. It might also include muscle weakness of the eyes, face, mouth, and throat. This weakness may spread to the neck, arms, legs and torso, which can lead to difficulty breathing and even death. It is essential to seek emergency medical attention immediately for anyone displaying these symptoms.

For more information about botulism, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/botulism/>. If you have further questions, contact Howard County Health Department at 410 313-1412 during the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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